United Nations E/2016/NGO/55

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 May 2016
English
Original: French

2016 session
24 July 2015-27 July 2016
Agenda item 5
High-level segment

Statement submitted by Perfect Union, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

Development assistance is voluntary action by an externai actor to drive development in a third country (a "developing country"). It is thus of an international nature. The donor may be a State, a public or private organization or a group of countries.

Development assistance is given for activities in various areas:

- Education
- Training
- Health
- Social sector
- Construction
- Development

Development assistance to implement those activities may take various forms:

- Grants to finance projects
- Loans at preferential rates
- Debt cancellation

Official development assistance came about in the context of the cold war and decolonization. It was created on 20 January 1949, in the State of the Union address by President Harry Truman of the United States. That speech advocated using the progress and knowledge of developed countries to benefit developing countries. That concept has evolved to address the challenges of globalization. With the emergence of the concept of sustainable development, development assistance went beyond the mere provision of technical knowledge to recognize cultural diversity. Some prefer the notion of development cooperation to that of development assistance. Development cooperation involves participatory support, as projects are developed in cooperation with local communities. Recently, there has been increased discussion of "co-development" between so-called developed and less developed countries. Jean-Michel Servet, in "Aide au développement: six décennies de trop dits et de non dits", argues that development assistance has always been a subject of debate. Similarly, in *L'aide publique au développement*, Olivier Charnoz and Jean-Michel Severino explain that many countries have a negative view of development assistance. They claim that beneficiary countries are not seeing progress, in spite of the assistance, because the aid is:

- Spent on poorly designed projects
- Misappropriated by local officials
- Sent to corruption-ridden countries

They argue that the emphasis has been on means rather than results. To achieve results, they advise the measurement of development assistance effectiveness as a basis for transforming the assistance system. Various questions have been raised with a view to making development assistance more effective:

- Is it impossible for development assistance to address the root causes of problems?
- How can we do better?
- How can we better measure the effectiveness of assistance?
- Why should we act?
- Where should we act?
- How should we act?
- How can we be as fair as possible?
- Should assistance be increased?
- Should assistance be stopped?
- Should assistance be strengthened?
- Do we need to move towards a new system?
- Does the aid system need to be completely revamped?
- Can we or should we make changes? If so, how?

In an unprecedented crisis, development assistance is still a vital resource if it is used well. The ever-increasing demand for aid calls for action, reflection and the effective organization of aid distribution. Whom does this concern? We all share the same planet and our fates are closely intertwined. Therefore, we must all rally around this common cause in order to create a sustainable world for all, particularly for those in greatest need. National development policies should be consistent with an approach that links poverty reduction to the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Of all the major policy priorities, combating poverty is thus the primary objective. In that connection, the United Nations has developed new objectives in key areas. In its Millennium Report (A/54/2000), it sets out the aim of putting people at the centre of the policymaking process, with a view to living better together. The Millennium Development Goals were established for that purpose. These Goals, which were adopted by 193 United Nations Member States and 23 international organizations, were to be achieved by 2015.

The United Nations also refers to a global partnership for development. As there is clearly a common objective here, the focus should be on establishing procedures for better joint management of the assistance provided. A number of systems are possible. Following discussions and work with a number of partners around the world and a subsequent analysis of various models, we created an innovative and effective atlas of sustainable project management. This was developed into the MAPEX method, which is now recognized around the world.

Do we need evolution or revolution? MAPEX is an effective tool with the potential to make a significant contribution in the area of development assistance. A global partnership for development rooted in a commitment to excellence, thanks to MAPEX, would be truly innovative.

MAPEX, a methodology for excellence in project management, places good governance at the heart of sustainable and balanced development for all. Action

should no longer be taken in haste, but rather on the basis of a real strategy of excellence for sustainable development. Actions should not be based on generosity alone; they should be well founded and intelligible, while remaining people-centred. We are at the dawning of a new era of partnership reflecting values and common sense. One way to explain this is through the example of climate change. The consequences of the actions of so-called developed countries are extremely harmful for populations, in particular the most vulnerable ones. Companies from so-called developed countries cut down trees that represented the livelihoods of local people, without replanting them. Consequently, even if development assistance is provided, it is irrelevant in the face of those companies' actions. If there are no trees left on the Earth, how will the peoples of either the North or the South breathe or live? None will be spared. It must be emphasized that climate change has devastating consequences, such as rising sea levels, melting ice, disease, hurricanes and the death of animals, that affect everyone.

We must therefore work together to ensure that actions are taken in the form of projects. We must all see ourselves as stewards of the Earth and act to protect it. To do so, we must move forward together, being sure to include the most deprived in particular. The goal is to live in a world that provides prosperity for all. Therefore, actions must be devised in terms of projects. That involves considering the life cycle of a project, which comprises several stages: design, implementation and evaluation. When doing so, it is desirable to focus more on preventive measures than on curative ones. We have therefore carried out upstream work to develop a methodology that strengthens the first stage of the project: the design. Why? The reason is simple: when a project is well designed from the beginning, it has every chance of success. We offer a toolkit that makes it possible to take better-informed decisions concerning assistance. More than a simple assistance application, what is needed is a process for developing true projects of excellence. That involves taking the time to select and prepare actions in accordance with strict eligibility criteria and conditionalities.

(I) Project selection: using strict eligibility criteria to identify effective projects of excellence

This involves verifying the eligibility of project proposals in accordance with precise specifications. Based on the feedback we have received, we have established a list of criteria that must be met for the project to be considered:

- Criterion 1: The project involves sustainable prosperity.
- Criterion 2: The project involves social inclusion.
- Criterion 3: The project involves environmental protection.
- Criterion 4: The project promotes peace, hope and positive values.
- Criterion 5: The project takes a common-sense approach.
- Criterion 6: The project team has expertise in the relevant area.
- Criterion 7: The project is of a reasonable duration.
- Criterion 8: The project is of an operational nature (and works).
- Criterion 9: The project is local or is suited to the local context.

- Criterion 10: The project benefits as many people as possible (collective dimension).
- Criterion 11: The project benefits local communities.
- Criterion 12: The project targets the heart of the issue and is in line with priorities for action (major problems).
- Criterion 13: The project has specific parameters.
- Criterion 14: There is a reversibility trigger.
- Criterion 15: Priority is given to direct processes.
- Criterion 16: The project is positive (has positive results).
- Criterion 17: The necessary administrative authorizations are in order (building permits, etc.).
- Criterion 18: The necessary legal authorizations are in order (property titles, etc.)
- Criterion 19: The documentation necessary for the exercise of the activity has been obtained (certification of competency).
- Criterion 20: The project has a significant impact on employment.

(II) Support for initiators of projects of excellence in the design of effective projects using conditionality criteria

Support for project design is an essential element of improving the aid system. There is a gap between target populations and donors. Project design requires a level of expertise that is often lacking in the target population. Sometimes the recipients of the aid are entities capable of managing the technical aspects of projects. Development assistance provides the funds they need. Assistance efforts should be as close as possible to the population, or preferably at the service of the population. The gap between the target population and the donor must be narrowed. There are many entities that would like to implement projects but do not have the necessary funding and would like to receive financing for their activities. A solid and efficient aid mechanism should therefore be put in place. The strict eligibility criteria that must be met before any action is taken, and the conditions for such aid, should ensure that beneficiaries on the ground make optimal use of the assistance granted for the benefit of the poorest groups.

(1) Condition 1: From an idea to a project

(a) From an idea to a project:

(i) Background: context of the project, central theme, figures and statistics

(ii) Nature of the problem

(iii) Objectives

(iv) Possible solutions, problems, advantages and disadvantages

(v) Chosen solution

(vi) Degree of innovation/originality: a project should not reflect a cut-and-paste approach but should have its own identity

(2) Condition 2: Project design

(a) Motivation (why?)

(b) Activities (what?)

(c) Target population — end beneficiaries (who?)

(d) Location (where?)

(e) Timing (when?)

(f) Impact (on employment, the environment, etc.)

(3) Condition 3: Clear planning

(a) Duration of each activity

(b) Completion of a pilot phase

(c) Deployment phase

(d) Human resources

(4) Condition 4: Strict project budgeting

(a) Two conditions for payment:

(i) Reporting of expenditure

(ii) Achievement of objectives

(b) The project initiator must make a contribution (which may be in kind)

(c) The contribution in kind must be valued, whether it comprises:

(i) Movable assets or real estate

(ii) Land or infrastructure

(iii) Human resources (staff and volunteers)

(5) Condition 5: Transparency of actions

(6) Condition 6: Partnership element

(7) Condition 7: Performance indicators for monitoring changes and progress in implementing the project:

(a) Quantitative results

(b) Qualitative results

(c) Risk factors and mitigation measures

(d) Reversibility triggers

This toolkit can be developed and supplemented while still maintaining the fundamental aspects of a partnership- and excellence-based development approach.